

# FORMER CONVICT HAVING HARD TIME 'BEATING BACK'; BULLS NEVER FORGET HE CLAIMS

BY JACK CARBERRY.  
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KANSAS CITY, Mo., Sept. 20.—Egan from headquarters laid the rug's gallery picture of the man under discussion before Casey, the chief.

"An ex-con, eh?"

"There's no need of continuing the narrative of the dialogue which followed—it's an old, old story," says John C. Mabray—and Mabray should know.

For Mabray, once the head of the most notorious band of "con-men" in the history of crime, is "beating back."

"And the bulls never forget," Mabray claims.

"Once you're an ex-con you are always that," he says.

**Underworld Against Him**

"But, worse still, for the man attempting to go straight, is the underworld itself," Mabray claims.

"Johnny" Mabray, who, with "the Waco Kid" (William Powell) and Ed-

die K. Morris, took the farmers of the Middle West to a \$5,000,000 trimming during the years of 1907-08, is now engaged in mustering influence to go before President Harding to ask a complete pardon from a portion of a jail sentence still pending and the remitting of a \$10,000 fine, imposed in 1910.

Since 1912 Mabray has been living in Kansas City.

"And I'm afraid that if President Harding does not act quick the underworld will get me, because I won't go crooked again," Mabray says.

**Asks Help of Law**

Last week Mabray visited Colonel M. L. Temple, now living in Osceola, Mo., who was United States District Attorney when Mabray's gang was broken up.

"After I was released from the Leavenworth Penitentiary the police branded me an 'ex-con'—fair game for arrest. Every time anybody lost a thin dime to a con-man the chief would give orders to 'pick up Mabray'! That's the penalty the ex-con-vict pays. The bulls never forget," Mabray told Colonel Temple.

"But now I am meeting a more sincere force—the underworld itself," Mabray said.

"In Kansas City I have been holding out a helping hand to young men who are in danger of crossing the borderland of the underworld and into crime."

**Crime Record Known**

"The underworld knows this—knows that with the crime record I possess, which I have since directed along the lines of good, I can do them more harm than all the police of the city."

"And so they have vowed to get me—to send me back behind prison bars, in order that they may be free to recruit the youth necessary to successful crime."

Mabray claims he is hated in the haunts of the underworld, where once he ruled as king.

"No man can go straight and retain friendship of the underworld," Mabray says. "I have tried it and failed. There is no honor among thieves—or among 'con-men'—they don't believe in letting a fellow go straight."

**Has Dramatic History**

The yellow-back of detective fiction—the wildest dream of the dime-novel writer—never even approached the dramatic history of Mabray and his gang.

How many composed the "layout" of the Mabray gang none but Johnny Mabray himself ever knew.

There was Powell—"the Waco Kid"—termed by police of the entire country "the smoothest package of green goods stuff which ever made a small town."

"And look at Powell," Mabray says: "He tried to go straight—and they got him."

Powell was shot down in the main dining room of the fashionable Ponce de Leon Hotel, as St. Augustine, Fla. He had "squealed" on his pals.

**Played "Green Goods" Game**

The band operated all the "green goods" and "con" games known to the underworld.

They specialized on fake sporting events, however—foot and horse races and prize fights.

In addition they operated wire tapping schemes, false stock exchanges, and even sunk to the "soap racket" and the "gold brick" schemes. They sold buildings—including the Masonic Temple in Chicago, the Flatiron Building in New York and the Ferry Building in San Francisco.

In their two years of operation they made \$5,000,000.

"We never stole a dime," Mabray boasts. "We just relieved moneybags of their money."

**"Cleaned the Corn Belt"**

The band, working with Council Bluffs, Ia., as headquarters, "cleaned"



This Washington girl is a regular human rubber plant. She can do stunts like this besides all kinds of fancy swimming and diving.

the "Corn Belt" for \$1,000,000 in one month, according to sworn admissions made by Mabray on the witness stand during the trial of Ben Marks, acquitted in connection with what was then known as the "big store" swindle.

The Mabrays used the "sport fakes" there.

A "capper" would "catch on" to a farmer—a man from the Middle West—with from \$10,000 to \$50,000 in the bank—his lifetime savings.

The "capper" would also pose as a farmer—or small-town banker. He would tip off his new-found friend to a prize fight, or a foot race, to be staged between two champions—it was a grudge fight, or grudge race between the two and to be run in secret.

**Farmers "Taken In."**

The farmer would be taken to the scene of the fight.

The "capper" would announce he was going to bet.

If the farmer showed a willingness to put up a little money too, the "capper" protested.

"I don't want any of my friends to lose—tell you what I'll do," he would say. Then he would make a proposition of loaning the farmer \$100 or \$200 to bet.

"If you win pay me back—if not I'll be the loser," he would say. The farmer always fell—and failing, won.

This would lead to more betting. Then would come the "clean up."

**Victims Are "Tipped Off"**

The farmer would be tipped off that a "fake" fight was coming off. It was all set for a certain man to win.

He was advised to get down all he owned on the affair.

Having won previously on the advice of his friend, the farmer plunged. The rest of the story is as old as the story of crime itself—the farmer was trimmed.

Having participated in what he was told was a "fake" fight he was afraid to complain.

"They were all as crooked as we were—planning to trim somebody else," Mabray justified his operations.

"We never trimmed one who wasn't out trying to trim somebody else and got caught doing it."

**Turns State's Evidence**

Mabray in his trials turned State's evidence against men who sold protection to his gang.

It is because of this, he claims, that the underworld is now trying to "get him."

But Mabray never "squealed" on the men who had been with him in his crimes. He was offered immunity if

he would turn up his gang. This he refused to do.

"If I can only win a complete pardon and have my \$10,000 fine remitted I can go on with the work of keeping young men from the underworld."

Mabray is telling government officials whose aid he is asking to restore his citizenship. "Then I will not be afraid of the bulls who never forget and the criminals who never forgive."

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## Two-Skirt Suits



It is now quite the thing to have two skirts to your suit. It is always the skirt that wears out and needs pressing first and many of the manufacturers have taken up the two-skirt idea. One may be fancy and the other plain and vary the wardrobe.

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